

The following is a translation of the "Radio Farda" Persian program, which was broadcast via satellite on September 5, 2007 at 1500 UTC.

TRANSLATION BEGINS HERE

[Female voice]

This is Radio Farda.

[Male voice]

Radio Farda News.

Germany's Prosecutor detained two German citizens and one Turkish citizen who were suspected of plotting attacks on facilities and centers frequented by Americans.

21 more people were hanged in Iran today.

The spokesman of the U.S. Department of State says that he hopes that Iran will not lose the unique opportunity for settling its nuclear case.

[Host Shirin Famili]

It's 18:30. Greetings, dear listeners! I wish you all a good Wednesday evening. Thanks for listening to Radio Farda's evening magazine. It is the 14th of Shahrivar, 1386 or September 5th, 2007. I am Shirin Famili and I will be at your service within the next one hour with various reports on the most important events in Iran and the world. But before listening to the reports, let's listen to an excerpt of the most important news by Fereydoon Zarnegar.

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Greetings and good evening! I will inform you about the current news.

Germany's Federal Prosecutor, Monika Harms, announced today in a news conference that two German citizens and a Turkish national, who were suspected of imminent terrorist attacks in Germany, have been detained. Mrs. Harms added that those people had prepared some 700 kilograms of substances, similar to the ones used in last summer's terrorist attacks in the Underground in London, and intended to attack airports, recreation centers, and other centers frequented by Americans in Germany.

According to Germany's Prosecutor General, these detainees have been trained for terrorist activities in Pakistan.

The Islamic Republic's TV reported that 21 people, who had committed crimes such as drug trafficking and armed robbery, were executed in Iran today. 17 people in Khorasan Razavi and four others in Shiraz were hanged. In the last nine months, at least 170 people labeled as "drug traffickers and hoodlums" and charged with committing, what the Islamic Republic's Prosecutor General describes, as "viciousness, rape, violence and kidnapping," have been executed in Iran.

Emphasizing the fact that America's policy vis-à-vis the Islamic Republic's nuclear issue has not changed, the Spokesman of the U.S. State Department, Don Casey, said the United States continues talking to its allies and friends in the U.N. Security Council about preparing another resolution for extending sanctions and punishments against the Islamic Republic.

In reply to a question raised by reporters, Mr. Casey added that he wished to believe that there are logical figures among the Islamic Republic's leaders who would be willing to seize the current unique and important opportunity to be able to maintain their civil nuclear program through face-to-face negotiations with superpowers, while removing the international concern over Iran's nuclear program. IAEA Director General, Muhammad ElBaradei's latest report on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program is supposed to be examined in the Agency's Council of the Governors next week. A copy of this report has also been sent to the permanent members of the Security Council.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki met with the supreme Ayatollah Ali Sistani in Najaf today and talked to him about the renewal of his cabinet. Mr. Maliki said that Ayatollah Sistani announced his support for the renewal of the cabinet and the actions taken by Maliki's government for achieving national unity and establishing security in Iraq.

The U.S. Army announced today that they had detained a wanted Iraqi in Karbala who has been in touch with high-ranking authorities of the Islamic Republic's Guard Corps Quds troops. The U.S. army said that this person has cooperated with the Quds troops in the military training of rebels and smuggling weapons into Iraq.

[Host Shirin Famili]

Thanks to Fereydoon Zarnegar, who gave us a summary of the most important news! We will hear the following reports in this Evening Magazine.

- Germany's Prosecutor General says that the three people detained in Germany on charges of subversive operations are related to the Union of Islamic Jihad.
- The British Prime Minister said that this country's policy vis-à-vis Iran has not changed.
- Negative reactions of American officials to Turkey's agreements with Iran on natural gas continue.
- 44 institutions defending human rights issued a joint statement asking Iran to stop its practice of suppressing dissidents and journalists and executing and stoning to death.
- And we have some other various reports. Stay with us.

As you heard in the news, following the arrest and detention of the three young people who intended to carry out a series of subversive operations in Germany, Germany's Prosecutor General said in a news conference today that these three people are linked with the Union of Islamic Jihad and had plotted to commit bombing operations in airports and in places frequented by Americans. Shahram Merian has more on this:

[Shahram Merian]

One day after the arrest of three young people who, following an extensive plot in Germany, intended to commit subversive operations, Germany's Prosecutor General and the head of Germany's federal criminal police disclosed the activities of these three people. Mrs. Monika Harms, Germany's Prosecutor General, stated at the beginning of her speech that this country's security forces managed on Tuesday afternoon, to arrest three people who were suspected of plotting terrorist operations, thus, preventing a series of bombings in Germany.

The arrested people are two Germans and a Turkish national linked to the Islamic Jihad Union which is known to have close ties to al-Qaeda organization. These three people had been under surveillance by security forces months ago and intended to aim their actions primarily to American centers and facilities, as well as airports in Germany. Mrs. Monika Harms, Germany's Prosecutor General, furthermore noted that while inspecting

some 30 places in Germany, they detected a house where barrels full of dangerous chemicals had been stored.

According to Mrs. Harms, the destructive effect of these chemicals was equivalent to that of 550 kilograms of TNT. Germany's prosecutor general went on to say that these three young people had been trained in the training camps in Pakistan. Referring to the extent of the subversive operations thwarted, Joerg Ziercke, the director of Germany's federal criminal police service, said that some 300 criminal police officials had monitored the subversive activities of these three young people for six months, and added that such actions are indicative of the fact that Germany is also a target of terrorist attacks. Shahram Merian, Radio Farda.

[Host Shirin Famili]

You are listening to Radio Farda's Evening Magazine.

In the news conference held at the prime minister's headquarters [10 Downing Street], the British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, stated that Britain's policy toward Iran has not changed and that Britain continues to support the U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iran. Shahrar Tabari, in London, has talked with the head of the British Parliament's Committee of Foreign Relations and a former British diplomat in Iran:

[Shahrar Tabari]

In his second news conference in the capacity of Britain's prime minister, which was held in the prime minister's headquarters, the new British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, said to the reporters that if Iran did not bring a halt to its sensitive nuclear activities, his government would support the issuing of a third U.N. Security Council resolution against Iran. On behalf of Radio Farda, I asked Mike Gapes, head of the British Parliament's Committee of Foreign Relations, "What is your impression of Mr. Brown's words?"

[Mike Gapes]

I think that what he says is quite clear. Although our country does not object to Iran's nuclear program for producing energy and for civil uses, it does not agree to the production of nuclear weapons by Iran whatsoever. Currently, the international community, like us, is also pursuing the same goal.

[Shahrar Tabari]

Chris Randal, a former British diplomat in Iran and an analyst of the regional issues, explains Britain's policy more elaborately and says, "I think that Britain's policy vis-à-vis Iran is based on two pillars. On one hand, it is interested in engagement with Iran and the continuation of talks for establishing better relations; on the other hand, however, it is based on our compliance with the United Nations and its resolutions for settling Iran's nuclear issue. This way, our two-edged policy advances simultaneously and in parallel with each other. I asked Mike Gapes, "Iran claims that it is cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); do you think any changes have taken place in Iran's attitude?"

[Mike Gapes]

I think it too early to judge. At the present, it is only Iran that claims so, but the IAEA has not confirmed it yet.

[Shahran Tabari]

As to the Prime Minister Brown's mention of a third U.N. resolution and Britain's support for it, Chris Randal, a former British diplomat in Iran, expressed his personal view by stating, "Personally, I don't believe that such resolutions would necessarily result in any remarkable changes in Iran's attitude, but we can never pass a precise judgment on this. For instance, the latest two appointments in Iran's political arena are encouraging. One is the appointment of Mohammad Ali Jafari as the new commander of the Guards Corps, and the other one is the election of Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani to chair the Assembly of Experts.

Such changes can be the primary indications of the fact that Iran's leadership is moving toward taking more sensible policies. However, Chris Randal believes that if Iran does not adopt an approach of cooperation and collaboration with the international community, as Gordon Brown put it, the sanctions will continue. He went on to say, "Well, I think that various measures would be taken against Iran by the United Nations, especially regarding financial and commercial relations, the purpose of which is to convince the Iranian government to comply with the U.N. resolutions regarding Iran's nuclear case. The third resolution of the United Nations, supported by our government, will also follow this purpose."

Mike Gapes also confirmed this and stated, "The position of the British government is to follow the U.N. Security Council and ask for the continuation of resolutions in case Iran fails to cooperate."

[Host Shirin Famili]

A report by Shahrar Tabari.

In other news, the U.S. authorities have once more reacted to Turkey's agreements with Iran on natural gas. Nicholas Burns, the U.S. Undersecretary of State, considered investment in Iran's oil and gas industry as providing the Iranian regime with a discordant message. Still, Turkey says that it is not going to relinquish its energy contracts with Iran. Ali Javanmardi reports from Ankara:

[Ali Javanmardi]

CNN Turk News Agency reported that U.S. Undersecretary of State Nicholas Burns has described investment in Iran's oil and gas industry as dishonest and has said that signing energy contracts with Iran is tantamount to providing the Iranian regime with a discordant message. The United States has explained its position regarding this issue to Asian, European and Middle Eastern countries. Nicholas Burns believes that investment in Iran's oil and gas industry is not in accord with international sanctions against Tehran's government.

In mentioning the decision of the U.S. Congress, that sanctions be exercised against companies that invest more than 20 million dollars in Iran's oil and gas industry, the U.S. Undersecretary of State noted that Iran is not the only gas producing country in the world, and that contracts can be concluded with Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan for this purpose. In his speech, Nicholas Burns pointed out that gas agreements between Iran and Turkey were concluded last month. According to these agreements, Turkmenistan's gas will be transferred to Turkey via Iran and then from there to Europe.

Also, three important phases of Iran's South Pars gas field will be assigned to Turkish oil companies. As per this contract, Iran will practically join the great Amoco project, which transfers Middle Eastern and Central Asian gas to Europe through Turkey. The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Minister of Energy Hilmi Guler, had already said that they would not relinquish their gas contracts with Iran. Today an official in Turkey's Ministry of Energy, who did not wish to have his name disclosed, announced in a written note to Khabar Turk TV that Turkey considers investment for purchasing Iran's natural gas, and gas contracts with Tehran,

in line with its national interests and will not relinquish it whatsoever, and hopes that other countries will understand this. Ali Javanmardi, Radio Farda, Ankara.

[Host Shirin Famili]

In Iran, the election Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as the chairman of the Islamic Republic's Assembly of Experts has led to reactions in political circles and media. These reactions have also continued in the western media, including French ones. News regarding the election of the new chairman were present in today's issue of The Figaro newspaper, published in Paris, as well France's state radio morning magazine program. Let's listen to a summary of these articles by Mir Ali Hosseini in Paris:

[Mir Ali Hosseini]

The Figaro newspaper writes under the title of "Rafsanjani's Great Return", "The return of Hashemi Rafsanjani to the heart of the state shows that the penalties against Iran have had a real impact. These penalties have intensified a silent but horrendous fight over power in Tehran". The Figaro newspaper writes that Hashemi Rafsanjani, unlike the present president, and as a pragmatic conservative, is opposed to the isolation of the country resulting from Mr. Ahmadinejad's indecent policies and attitude. Taking the helm of the Assembly of Experts, Mr. Rafsanjani stands as an opponent of Mr. Ahmadinejad's and a possible substitute for the leader of the Islamic Republic. Thus for now, the hands of the clock turn towards moderate conservatives and the Figaro provides some reasons for this change. Due to the lack of foreign investment in the key sectors of the society, Iran's economy is rapidly worsening.

Gas has been rationed because Iran is not able to refine its oil. Furthermore, with its decline in oil production together with the rise in population, demand is increasing to the point that it is feared that Iran will have to import oil in ten years. The Figaro newspaper writes that the promises given to the poor population by Mr. Ahmadinejad, although popular, have not been realized. Meanwhile, the ruling class and the middle class (the bazaar) are concerned that the president's inflexible position will endanger the future of the country.

The Figaro adds, "How can it not be perceived that if Iran uses all its resources for another policy, it will [not] be able to enjoy the same progress as China and India, which have joined the coterie of those who greatly

benefit from the global economy. In recent months, Mr. Rafsanjani, who is an admirer of the Chinese model, revealed his viewpoint regarding this and advocated a moderate policy in directing Iran's nuclear case.

The Figaro writes that, as usual, the changes taken place in Iran do not encompass several joint ideas. A few days ago, the Islamic Republic's leader appointed a new commander for the Revolutionary Guards, who is a military expert in Iraq's issues, hinting at the fact that the Islamic Republic is getting ready for the time when the U.S. troops will leave Iraq. The Figaro writes in the end that Iran is definitely very far from capitulation, but the U.N. penalties shake the pillars of this breathless system.

At the same time, Bernard Getta, France Inter's expert in international issues on France's state radio, described Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's election as the chairman of the Assembly of Experts as "a chance for western countries" and added in its conclusion that vis-à-vis Iran's changes, western countries can cleverly foment disunion among the heads of the Islamic Republic system and perhaps the downfall of the system. Paris, Mir Ali Hosseini, Radio Farda.

[Host Shirin Famili]

Electing Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as the chairman of the Assembly of Experts has resulted in various reactions among political analysts both within and outside of Iran. Arman Mostofi reports:

[Arman Mostofi]

The commentator for the E'temad newspaper reports on the practical establishment of two factions in the Assembly of Experts: 1) The faction of Pragmatists lead by Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mahmoud Hashemi Shahroudi and 2) the faction of Radicals or Extremists, led by Muhammad Ali Mesbah Yazdi and Ahmad Jannati. The E'temad writes that Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's election as the chairman of the Assembly of Experts shows that opposition to radical methods has penetrated the most fundamental pillars of the Islamic Republic system, meaning the Assembly of Experts.

The E'temad Melli newspaper, affiliated with the E'temad Melli party, led by Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karroubi, the former Majlis speaker, also confirms the establishment of two factions in the Assembly of Experts and writes, "If Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati had been elected as the chairman of the

Assembly of Experts, the project for the elimination of Hashemi Rafsanjani would have succeeded.

The Jomhuri Islami [Islamic Republic] newspaper, which is both dependent on the Office of the Leader of the Islamic Republic and a supporter for Hashemi Rafsanjani, has described the election of Hashemi Rafsanjani as the chairman of the Assembly of Experts as "a political weigh-in" and has referred to the opponents' propaganda, including what it has called "poisoning by a lady", to show the importance of this election. Of course, the Jomhuri Islami has not mentioned the said lady's name, but it referred to Mrs. Fatima Rajabi, who is the wife of Gholam-Hossein Elham, Ahmadinejad's spokesman. Mrs. Fatima Rajabi, the author of the book "Ahmadinejad, the Miracle of the Third Millennium", who is one of the most obstinate opponents of Hashemi Rafsanjani, had written yesterday that people with political, cultural, economic and familial misgivings are not competent to chair the Assembly of Experts. She has not mentioned Hashemi Rafsanjani's name either.

And, finally the Keyhan newspaper – which is on one hand considered as the ideological tribune of Ahmadinejad's supporters, while on the other hand and especially during the recent weeks, opposed Hashemi Rafsanjani severely – adopted a peaceful approach by downplaying the level of differences and describing them as "differences of taste" after Hashemi Rafsanjani was elected as the chairman of the Assembly of Experts and admired Hashemi Rafsanjani as the "Cylinder of the Revolution" and has quoted him in the headlines as saying, "The Islamic Republic gains its legitimacy from Velayat-e Faqih"

[Host Shirin Famili]

A report by Arman Mostofi! It is 18:51:20. You are listening to Radio Farda's Evening Magazine. Within the past one or two days, Haleh Esfandiari, the Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, managed to leave Iran. And Nazi or Parnaz Azima, Radio Farda's Farsi correspondent, Radio Free Europe, Radio Liberty, received her passport from the official of the Islamic Republic's Ministry of Intelligence. Kian Tajbakhsh and Ali Shakeri, two other Iranian-Americans who were detained several months ago and interrogated on similar charges of acting against the national security of the country, still have an uncertain situation. Maryam Mansouri has more

details on this along with notes from some English newspapers regarding this issue:

[Maryam Mansouri]

The Los Angeles Times newspaper, in its issue today, discusses Haleh Esfandiari leaving Iran and writes: "Mrs. Esfandiari managed to be bailed out shortly after Ali Khamenei, the Islamic Republic's leader, replied to the letter from her boss at the Woodrow Wilson Center, Mr. Lee Hamilton." Mr. Hamilton is one of the directors of the Woodrow Wilson Center and a former Democratic member of U.S. House of Representatives. He was also a member of Iraq Research group. Mr. Hamilton then asked for releasing Mrs. Esfandiari by sending a respectful letter and promised to endeavor for establishing peace between Iran and America. Sharon McCarty, the director of Woodrow Wilson International Center's public relations department, said to Radio Farda, in reply to whether Mrs. Esfandiari will resume her former activities at the Woodrow Wilson International Center:

[Sharon McCarty]

We heard the news of Haleh leaving Iran and that she would come back to the United States very soon. We are looking forward to her return to the Wilson Center so that she will resume her work and research. Haleh will continue her past work as the Director of the Middle East Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center.

[Maryam Mansouri]

Haleh Esfandiari had already told the Washington Post newspaper that during the 105 days of her imprisonment, she had planned an exercise schedule so that she could survive prison. Mrs. Esfandiari told the Washington Post that she would sometimes be permitted to walk in a small yard in the prison, although she was always alone and she would see nobody but the interrogators and the female prison guards. The Washington Post adds, "Haleh Esfandiari had been imprisoned in a cell in the political prisoners' ward of Evin Prison and would sleep on a bed made of six blankets and two chadors. As soon as she was released from Evin Prison, Mrs. Haleh Esfandiari made the following statement in a conversation with the Islamic Republic's state TV:

[Haleh Esfandiari]

I had a room, which was very large and bright and had windows. Outdoor recreation time was really long. I mean whenever it was possible, they would permit me to go outside. The prison atmosphere was very good.

[Maryam Mansouri]

The writer for the Los Angeles Times continues the article by asking whether Ayatollah Khamenei, intervening in the highly fractioned government, sided with those who said that American prisoners in Iran are changing into a weak point in Iran, or Mrs. Esfandiari's release can be considered as an attempt by Iran to calm Bush's administration, which is extremely angry with Iran. This newspaper concludes by writing that severing the diplomatic relations between Iran and America is a reason for keeping Iran mysterious to the United States and describes it as a "dangerous severance of relations". The writer of the article in the Los Angeles Times emphasizes that now that the third round of Iran-America's negotiations about Iraq is approaching, it is time for genuine negotiations. Chris Randal, a former British diplomat in Iran and an analyst of regional issues, describes the release of Iranian-Americans as part of the recent confrontations between the two countries and adds:

[Chris Randal]

In my opinion, this is part of the confrontation between Iran and the United States; by detaining and accusing these people, the Islamic Republic tried to show that the United States is trying to apply a policy with the purpose of changing the regime in Iran, not changing Iran's attitude. While we are happy with the release of these people, still such a release is a sign of the strange relations between the two countries. Unfortunately, people with Iranian-American or Iranian-British dual citizenships must be careful about what they say outside Iran and carefully consider traveling to Iran.

[Maryam Mansouri]

The New York Times, in its issue today, refers to the situation of Nazi Azima, an Iranian-American journalist and Radio Farda's correspondent who stayed in Iran by force for the past 7 months and given permission to leave Iran on Tuesday. Mrs. Azima's passport was returned to her two days after Haleh Esfandiari left Iran. Mrs. Azima informed Radio Farda shortly after she picked up her passport on Tuesday:

[Nazi Azima]

The Information Ministry called me on Sunday and told me that they wanted to speak to me about my situation and that we might be able to reach a solution and asked me to set the day and time of the meeting myself. On Monday at 10 a.m., I went to speak to them and after a half-hour interview, they told me that I could pick up my passport.

Of course, I asked them whether the issue of my bail would be settled. But they told me the bail wouldn't be returned to me and my case would stay open for now. My lawyer is supposed to arrange a court date. I spoke to my lawyer, and he told me that he was planning to set a court date as soon as possible to clarify my case as well as my bail and the charges against me. Personally, I can't make any predictions about the decision the Information Ministry or the Judiciary will make about me.

[Maryam Mansouri]

In a conversation with Radio Farda, Shirin Ebadi, one of the lawyers of Mrs. Azima and Esfandiari, once more described the formation of cases against these two people as "illegal".

[Shirin Ebadi]

Basically, from the very beginning, forming cases against these two people was against the regulations of the state penal procedure. These people had not committed any crimes. They were innocent, and their leaving the country is quite natural, particularly because both have heavy responsibilities [in America], and if the hearing date and time is served on them, then they should come back to Iran. So, we are glad that we managed to obtain permission to leave Iran, but this should have been done on the very first day, and keeping them in prison or inside the country is against the regulations specified by Iran's laws.

[Maryam Mansouri]

The American newspaper International Herald Tribune writes in its issue today:

Nazi Azima went to Iran on the 5th of Bahman, 1385 or January 25th 2007, to visit her ailing mother. The officials first confiscated her Iranian passport and then she was accused of threatening the national security of the country in May. Iran has also accused two other Iranian-Americans of similar charges. Kian Tajbakhsh, a civil engineering consultant with the Open Society Institute, and Ali Shakeri, a member of the board of directors of Citizen Peace Center based in Irvine University, California. Mr.

Tajbakhsh and Mr. Shakeri are currently in jail. The Los Angeles Times newspaper, in its analytical article, quotes Judge Hassan Haddadi as referring to Kian Tajbakhsh's release in the near future and says that Ali Shakeri's situation is still uncertain. This newspaper then writes, "But the bad news is that nobody in Washington knows the reason for releasing Parnaz Azima and Haleh Esfandiari".

[Host Shirin Famili]

A report by Maryam Mansouri.

Dear listeners, with the purpose of helping you to have free access to information on the Internet and making it possible for you to have access to Radio Farda's website, Radio Farda introduces a new filter-breaking address each day. Our newest filter-breaking address is "roobaz.com".

This is Radio Farda.

It is 7:00 p.m. With greetings again, we thank you for joining us in the evening Magazine of Radio Farda.

In the second half of the evening magazine you will listen to a summary of the most important news from Farin Asemi.

[Farin Asemi]

Greetings. The U.S. Army announced today that an Iraqi who was under prosecution due to his ties with high-ranking officials of the Quds Forces of the Islamic Republic Guards Corps was arrested in Karbala. According to the U.S. Army, this person was collaborating with the Quds forces for the training of the insurgents and the smuggling of weapons. Today, the 14th of Shahrivar, or September 5, Nouri al-Maliki, the Prime Minister of Iraq, met with the Supreme Ayatollah Ali Sistani in Najaf, and discussed the renewal of his cabinet with him.

According to Mr. Maliki, Ayatollah Sistani declared his support for the renewal of the cabinet and the actions taken by his government for reaching national unity and establishing security in Iraq. Tom Casey, spokesman for the U.S. Department of State, while affirming that the U.S. policy has not changed with regards to the Iran nuclear issue, said that the United States continues discussions with its allies and friends in the United Nations Security Council regarding the preparation of another resolution for the expansion of sanctions and punishments against the Islamic Republic.

At the same time, Mr. Casey answered questions from journalists, saying that he would like to believe that there are some reasonable individuals within the leadership of the Islamic Republic who would like to take advantage of this unique and important present opportunity, in order to negotiate at table with the super powers regarding the nuclear program of Iran, and to help eliminate international concerns and preserve their non-military plan.

According to today's report from the [state] television of the Islamic Republic, 21 people charged as smugglers of drugs and armed robbery were executed in Iran; seventeen of them were executed in the Khorasan Razavi province and four others in Shiraz. In the past nine months, at least one hundred and seventy people were executed in Iran, charged as smugglers, hoodlums and gangsters and accused of what the Islamic Republic Prosecutor's Office considers villainy and violation of laws, abduction, and stabbing.

In a press conference today, the German Federal Prosecutor announced that two German citizens and a Turkish citizen who had planned an imminent terrorist attack were arrested in Germany. Mrs. Harms added that these people had prepared about 700 kilograms of chemicals, similar to those used in the terrorist attacks of London metro trains last summer. They had planned to attack airports, recreation centers and other places visited by Americans in Germany. According to the German Prosecutor, those arrested had undergone terrorist training in Pakistan.

[Host Shirin Famili]

With thanks to Farin Asemi who gave us a summary of the most important news.

A great number of major English language newspapers in the west have printed articles regarding the appointment of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani in the position of the director of Assembly of Experts.

Maryam Mansouri has a report on some of the articles of these newspapers.

[Maryam Mansouri]

In another action that is revealing of the discontent with the extremist policies of Iran, today the New York Times newspaper wrote that Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the former president who was replaced by the current

president, was appointed as the director of the Assembly of Experts. Quoting an Iranian analyst close to Hashemi Rafsanjani, this newspaper writes that Mr. Hashemi, after his defeat in the presidential elections against Mahmoud Ahmadinejad two years ago, had opted for silence and his counsel to Ayatollah Khamenei was disregarded. According to this analyst, who is quoted by the New York Times, the influence of Mr. Rafsanjani has now reached to the lowest possible level, and it is not clear what kind of help his new position, or the leadership of the Assembly of Experts, can provide towards his popularity and what effect his responsibilities will have in the Assembly.

The New York Times then recalls the interest of Ali Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic, in the restoration of the influence of Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani – the person who considers him as [unintelligible] for attaining the leadership in the regime.

The victory of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and attaining the position of leadership of the Assembly of Experts comes at the same time as international pressures on the government of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. According to the New York Times, in the current week, the biography of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani was removed by the government from the bookstore shelves because in a part of the book it is mentioned that Ayatollah Khomeini has supported the creation of the slogan “Death to the United States”.

The Irish Times newspaper has also stated that the appointment of Mr. Rafsanjani, who desires to have better relations between Iran and the West, as the leader of the Assembly of Experts, is a significant victory for him. Also, the newspaper describes this appointment as a strike against Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. But quoting experts, the Irish Times writes that this new appointment will not create any changes in the foreign policy of the Islamic Republic and the nuclear issue and will also not have much effect on the daily political process in Iran.

The Financial Times considers the appointment of Hashemi Rafsanjani as the leader of Assembly of Experts for a period of eight years an action that can strengthen his position in the political process of the country. According to this newspaper, even though this position is not an executive position, it can still be very effective. Quoting a political analyst and expert, the Financial Times writes “It is true that Mr. Rafsanjani is at a higher level in

comparison with Ayatollah Khamenei, but it is too early to predict how he can benefit from this situation”.

The Washington Post also speaks about Hashemi Rafsanjani's new position, where he has the authority to choose or to eliminate the leadership of the system. Washington Post describes the 73-year-old Hashemi as a centrist figure, in comparison to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who managed to defeat Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati and to attain the position of the leader of the Assembly of Experts.

[Host Shirin Famili]

Maryam Mansouri was reporting.

Perhaps this news is new to the majority of Iranians - that an Iranian engineer is one of the designers of the American war plane called the B-2 Bomber. In an interview with the Washington Post newspaper, this Iranian engineer says that imagining a war between Iran and the U.S. is like a nightmare for him because the bombers that he has designed will actually be used against Iran. Arash Alborzi reports.

[Arash Alborzi]

Najmedin Meshkati is the Iranian- American engineer who is among the designers of the American B-2 bomber. He is a graduate of engineering from Aryamehr-Sharif Industrial University, and he got his doctorate degree in industrial engineering in 1973 from USC in California and is currently a professor at that university. In a recent interview with the Washington Post, this Iranian scientist says that if a war occurs between the two countries of Iran and the United States, his life will be turned into a tragedy.

Mr. Meshkati, who took pride in the designing of the B-2 bomber for a long time, displaying in his office different models of this airplane, believes that the relations between Iran and the United States are even worse than the period of hostage-taking during the beginning of the Iranian Revolution. In a letter written by Najmedin Meshkati for an article in the Washington Post, quotes John F. Kennedy, the former U.S. President, as saying that there is no war that cannot be avoided, and if a war takes place, it is due to the shortcomings of human wisdom. He adds, “ I love both Iran and the United States – Iran is the country where I came from and the United States is the country of my children. How can I not have patriotic feelings with regards to these two countries?”

[Host Shirin Famili]

Arash Alborzi was reporting.

In spite of extensive protests against the increase of executions in Iran, and concurrent with the meeting of the Human Rights Commissioner of the United Nations in Tehran, the state television reported today the execution of 21 drug smugglers in the provinces of Khorasan Razavi and Fars.

More on this subject from Saideh Hashemi

[Saideh Hashemi]

According to the report of the media in Iran, seventeen of the executed people were hanged in the Khorasan Razavi province and 4 others in Shiraz. Colonel Alipour, a spokesman for the Iranian Police, in an interview with the state television of Iran announced that seventeen smugglers were executed on Wednesday in the Khorasan Razavi province, after having gone through all the legal procedures. Also, according to the Fars News Agency, the four people who were executed in southern Shiraz were also accused of villainy, possession of weapons, smuggling of drugs, armed confrontation with the officers, and action of war against God.

They were executed on Wednesday morning. According to this report, a large number of crowds had gathered in Khorasan and in Shiraz in order to view the punishment of these convicts. According to the judicial deputy of the Ministry of Justice in Fars, Abdolnabi Najibi, since the beginning of the this year, there have been weekly executions in the Fars province; averaging one or two of convicted murderers, villains or smugglers, and drug distributors. Mr. Najibi described these executions as an effort on behalf of the Iranian judicial system to establish a lasting social security and a serious means for confronting the corrupted.

Beginning this summer, statistics show a considerable increase in executions in Iran in efforts to implement a social security plan, and fight against those who are called gangsters and hoodlums in the Islamic Republic. The executions today took place while the United Nations High Commissioner of the Human Rights, Louise Arbour, was in Tehran to meet and hold talks with human rights and women's rights activists at the organization's headquarters in Tehran. Amnesty International has expressed concern with the sudden increase in the number of executions in Iran. In April, they issued a report announcing that 177 executions were carried out in 2006. According to the latest report issued by "Hands Off

Cain", an organization that is against capital punishment. In 2006, Iran was second only to China who leads the world with the highest number of executions. This report adds that among the victims of execution in Iran, there have been a few children under 18 years of age. The European community and many human rights organizations have criticized Iran for carrying out capital punishment and have asked for the cessation of capital punishment in Iran. The Iranian authorities have refuted the criticisms by western countries and human rights organizations that accuse them of breaching human rights and say that capital punishment has its roots in their religion and the Islamic Sharia.

With 21 people having been hanged in Iran, allow us to recap the human rights situation in Iran again. 44 human rights advocacy organizations throughout the world have issued a statement asking the Islamic Republic to put an end to the repression of intellectuals, journalists and the practice of execution and stoning in Iran. These human rights advocacy organizations, which are members of the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, have mentioned a great number of cases in which human rights were violated in the Islamic Republic and have asked Iran to abide by its international commitments.

Dr. Abdol-Karim Lahiji, the deputy director of the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, in a discussion with Fereydoon Zarnegar, provides reasons for issuing that statement by saying:

[Dr. Abdol-Karim Lahiji]

During the eight months of the current Christian calendar, there have been more than one hundred and fifty executions in Iran. This cannot be the sole voice by the human rights advocacy circles in Iran, nor the human rights activists abroad, or even the Federation, which is in fact the central body of all the human rights organizations. We have therefore asked all human rights activists, the 155 units which are members of the Federation, to take part in this request. Fortunately, although it has only been a few days since this request was made, already 44 human rights organizations from various countries in the world have responded to this request.

They have asked the Islamic Republic to stop this pressure and repression that unfortunately has increased in Iran during the past two or three months. We hope that over the next few days, dozens of other organizations will join this request. By issuing our statement, our goal was to draw attention to a

few important cases that will take place in Iran in September – first, the resolution of the Security Council for dealing with the nuclear program. We have repeatedly said that the question of Iran, with regards to the International community, should not be solely limited only to the question of nuclear program.

The question of democracy and human rights should be discussed alongside that matter with the authorities of the Islamic Republic. Second, and the other important event, is the formation of the Human Rights Council, which will start its work at the United Nation in Geneva within two weeks. We are hopeful that during the coming Council, the Iranian question, in addition to many other countries that have a serious human rights situation, will be properly addressed.

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Mr. Lahiji - for the past two days, Mrs. Louise Arbour, the United Nations High Commissioner of Human Rights, was in Tehran. In your opinion, can this trip have an effect in the improvement of the human rights situation in Iran, or do you have any news as to what kind of effect it has had and what the actual aim of this trip was?

[Mr. Lahiji]

About three weeks ago, when we learned that Mrs. Louise Arbour was traveling to Iran, I contacted her, and she explicitly affirmed that she was not traveling to Iran for the question of [Iran's] human rights. She said that there was a conference of the foreign ministers of non-aligned nations, and since they wanted to discuss the question of human rights among other issues, they invited her as well.

The only thing that I asked of her, and she agreed to, was at least to meet with a delegation of human rights activists, namely Shirin Ebadi in Tehran, and she promised to do so, and as you know this meeting did take place. But at the same time, she said that her concern was not the reviewing of human rights in Iran, but was curious to know why the Islamic Republic invited Mrs. Arbour in the first place? I think this invitation is another example, just like the liberation of Haleh Esfandiari, the returning of the passport of your colleague, Mrs. Nazi Azima, as well as the possibility of the liberation of Kian Tajbakhsh in the next few days. These are attempts, or one might even say they are all the doors to a 'green garden', that the Islamic Republic wants to show to the international community before the

meeting of the Security Council. They want to show that it has regained some rationality and [they] want to hold talks with the international community...

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Mr. Lahiji, even Mr. Mottaki, the Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic, has proposed that a human rights office for western Asia be established in Tehran; how do you appraise this proposal?

[Mr. Lahiji]

It is not the first time that such a proposition has been made – I can say that the Islamic Republic has played puppet shows with the international community and namely with human rights organizations. In 1993, when the second international Human Rights conference was taking place in Vienna, at that time, China, Iran, Algeria, Libya - all the known enemies of human rights - were putting a great deal of pressure for the Human Rights conference not to take place, which it did, and they were also questioning the internationality of human rights.

At the same time, on behalf of the representative office of the Islamic Republic, they were insisting that Tehran should become the human rights center for Asia. Therefore, Mrs. Arbour cannot refute this matter, but we have repeatedly said that while the doors of Iran are shut on all the international human rights organizations, how can Tehran become the center for human rights in Asia? I should also mention that Mrs. Arbour had not left Iran yet, or only a few hours after she had left Iran, that the execution gallows were set up once again. Therefore, the Islamic Republic or the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic cannot ridicule the international community in this manner.

[Host Shirin Famili]

Dr. Abdol-Karim Lahiji, the deputy director of the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues in a discussion with Radio Farda.

At the same time, in a report regarding the situation of the people in Iran, a New York Times journalist has written his observations after two weeks in Tehran and after interviewing different political and economic figures. In this report, he mentions that the economic situation of the people in Iran is getting worse, and given these conditions, it is only the leadership of the

Islamic Republic who support Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. A report from Parsa Shams.

[Parsa Shams]

Mr. Slackman writes in his report that home rentals have considerably increased in Iran and the economic situation of Iranians has deteriorated. The inflation rate has reached 17% and about ten million Iranians live under the poverty line. Recently, the police closed twenty men's hairdressing salons due to 'inappropriate' hairstyles they were giving, and cycling has been banned for women.

Quoting experts, it is said in this report that the economic situation of Iranians is deteriorating, while the foreign policy and the requests and speech of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, have made it more difficult for Iran to have access to the international arena. The New York Times reports that economic and national pressures create damages in all countries with such regimes. However, in the Islamic Republic, the opposite is taking place, and the government of Ahmadinejad has become even stronger. This report adds that the economic and banking policies of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, which intend to control the prices through government pressures, has stopped domestic investments, and his foreign policy has alienated foreign investors.

Mohammad Afshianfar, director of two reformist and confiscated newspapers called Sharq and Ham-Mihan, told the New York Times reporter that only Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic system, supports Ahmadinejad, and if this support is removed, he will soon be devoid of any power. Mohsen Kadivar, cleric and professor who has recently been deprived from teaching at Tehran University, told the New York Times reporter that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad seeks to take the Iranian community back to the beginning stages of the Revolution. Mr. Kadivar also said that Ahmadinejad's only wish is to have power in his hands.

The middle and lower class in Tehran and the suburbs of Tehran have told the New York Times reporter that they thought their situation would have improved with Ahmadinejad, but actually it has been the contrary, and their economic situation has deteriorated and worsened.

Mr. Slackman has depicted this picture at the end of his story regarding the life of the lower class people in Iran: Mehdi Panahi, who lives in the center of Tehran and owns a booth at the bottom of the mountains in northern Tehran, said that from the beginning of this year until now, he has been forced to increase the prices of his goods by 20%, due to the 50% price increase in cooking oil, tomato paste and dairy products have also increased by 70%.

[Host Shirin Famili]

Parsa Shams was reporting. You are listening to the evening magazine at Radio Farda.

Tahmasb Mazaheri has officially assumed his position as the general director of the Iranian Central Bank today. Mr. Mazaheri has replaced Ibrahim Sheybani. On the 30th of Mordad, or August 21, the Iranian News Agencies reported the news regarding the dismissal of Mr. Sheybani. According to the reports, the dismissal of the Central Bank's director was due to differences of opinion with regards to the changes that the Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government is supposed to implement in the Islamic Republic's banking system. Apparently Mr. Sheybani was in disagreement with regards to the decreasing of the interest rates at the bank and the establishment of a bank that provides interest-free loans. Fereydoon Zarnegar has a report on this:

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Tahmasb Mazaheri has officially assumed his position as the new general director of the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic as of today. His nomination to this point has been followed by many speculations, namely if the Central Bank will be able to preserve the independence that it currently has in terms of the government. Or will it totally be transformed into an executive tool? Dr. Fereydoun Khavand, an Iranian economic expert based in Paris says that this effort started with the dissolution of the Organization of Management and Planning and refers to the efforts of the government of Ahmadinejad for the greater expansion of the influence of the presidential entity in the major economic decision-making entities.

Dr. Fereydoun Khavand:

[Dr. Khavand]

In this regard, the Organization of Management and Planning was actually dissolved and there was the discussion that the Central Bank is the last

stronghold in which the technocrats working there are still resisting the decisions of the head of the government, referring to the director of the executive system. With the dismissal of Mr. Ibrahim Sheybani and the arrival of Mr. Tahmasb Mazaheri, it appears that these last stronghold resistances will also be destroyed.

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Dr. Khavand mentioned two of the viewpoints of Mr. Mazaheri, and the similarity of these viewpoints with those of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and said:

[Dr. Khavand]

When Mr. Tahmasb Mazaheri was the Minister of Economy and Finance in the cabinet of Mr. Mohammad Khatami, he presented a strange proposal about merging the Central Bank and the Organization of Management and Planning, in the Ministry of Economic and Finances. His proposition created a great deal of astonishment in the economic circles of Iran and was naturally faced with strong disagreements. This was due because the economic circles and the expert circles of the Islamic Republic said that this proposal meant that the remaining independence of the Central Bank would also be taken away.

Well, he has currently been appointed as the director of the Central Bank, and if he remains faithful to his previous thoughts and to the implementation of those ideas, it would mean that the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic will be transformed more and more into a state of dependency on the government, more so than before. The second thing that I would like to point out is that in his speech yesterday, Mr. Mazaheri put a great deal of emphasis on the question of interest and its reduction and how to solve it according to the wishes of the president. In this regard, he proposed solutions that have actually raised some astonishment within the expert circles of Tehran.

Mr. Mazaheri even talked about reaching a 0% inflation rate and how he implicitly wants to get rid of the interest rate.

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Ali Zandi, a journalist in Tehran, while mentioning that the reduction of bank interest is among the objectives of the Fourth Development Program, which was prepared in the previous government, told Radio Farda that the

government of Mr. Ahmadinejad was seeking to reach this objective since the beginning of his term in office.

[Ali Zandi]

The government of Mr. Ahmadinejad emphasized this matter from the very beginning; that the banks should be at the service of production and should get rid of institutionalization and corporatism and instead pursue the production sectors and the economy of the country.

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Considering the high rate of inflation, how can the rate of interest be reduced?

[Journalist Ali Zandi]

The bank interest rate itself is one of the cost-establishing factors for production. If the interest rate is high, and the private sector is not as strong of a sector, it will need to use the government funds and large and small deposits of the people in order to be able to produce. This will naturally increase the cost of production. Therefore, there is a relation between the bank interest rate and inflation, and the experts who support the reduction of the interest rate believe that in the long-term, its outcome will mean that when costs are down, prices will also come down and naturally have an effect on inflation – though in the short term it may actually generate inflation.

[Fereydoun Zarnegar]

Considering that Mr. Mazaheri has held different positions within the last two decades, does his opinion lean toward the direction of the Islamic Banking system endorsed by the president of the country that may be implemented?

[Ali Zandi]

During the past few days, he presented a program through which he claims to reduce the banking interest rate through a short or mid term program and bring it even to 0%. However, he did not elaborate on the details of this program and on how it can be feasible. The Islamic Banking system supports the use of money or liquidity in association with the production sector. The profits made in the production sector, are then divided in a consensual manner – between the bank, the sector providing the resources and the producer who is selling his product in a competitive market.

However, if in the following days, Mr. Mazaheri clarifies the his program on the reduction of the banking interest rate, then one can express opinions about whether he can be successful in the implementation of the program supported by the government for the reduction of banking interest and if this will actually take place or not.

[Fereydoon Zarnegar]

Previously Mr. Mazaheri, has held positions as a minister in the Ministry of Economy and Finances, as deputy director of the Central Bank, in the Institution of the Deprived and Self-Sacrificing, as the director of the Imam Aid Committee, and other responsibilities.

[Host Shirin Famili]

Mr. Fereydoon Zarnegar was reporting.

It is now time for the latest sports news by Fereydoon Sheibani.

The world of sports.

[Fereydoon Sheibani]

After modifying twice the dates of enrollment for candidacy of the directorship and board of directors of the Federation of Football, the date was finally announced for next Monday, the 19th of Shahrivar, or September 10th, up to the 29th of Shahrivar, or September 20th. Mohammad Mehdi Nabih, the temporary director of the Federation of Football, announced that the eligibility of the candidates will be determined by a delegation composed of three people within a maximum of ten days; he will head the general assembly himself.

The Iranian Football Federation was left without a director of the federation and board of directors after 2006 World Cup, and due to the changing of the previous directors by the Director of Sports and Physical Education in the Islamic Republic, the International Football Federation announced the intervention of the government in matters related to football as being illegal. This eventually led to a temporary privatization of Iranian football, until the elaboration of a new statute and the election of a Federation director in the general football assembly. This assembly will be held on the 23rd of Mehr, or September 14th.

The national Iranian women's volleyball team, after 29 years, will play its first official game in the Asian Women competitions in Bangkok, Thailand,

against the national team of Kazakhstan today. The Iranian team initially played a few preparatory games in Thailand and was defeated in a game with a university team. Sayid Derakhshandeh, the director of the Federation of Volleyball, after watching the games, announced their readiness and considered their performance as quite acceptable. He said that the Iranian women's team is in a very hard group. In addition to Kazakhstan, Taiwan and New Zealand will also be playing in Iran's group. The national team of Iran will be playing wearing their Islamic scarves, and in Iran it is forbidden for men to watch their game.

The fourth week of the Higher Iranian Football League will take place on Thursday and Friday of this week. Out of 9 games, three matches will be played tomorrow. The Istiqlal team in Kermanshah will meet Shirinfaraz. The Kermanshah team had threatened that due to difficulties encountered with the board of directors of football in this province, it would refrain from playing; however, it finally announced its presence.

Sephahan, after three consecutive victories, will play against Rahe Ahan in Isfahan. In Tehran, [unintelligible] is the host for the team of Sepasi from Shiraz.

For the 2008 European Football Championship competitions on Saturday against the Israeli team, the British national football team lost Frank '*unintelligible*' from the center line, due to a foot injury. There is a 50-50 chance of his presence next week, on Wednesday, in the competitions that will be held against Russia. But there is promising news for British football for the finals - Steven Gerrard will have the [unintelligible] removed from his toe, so that on Saturday he may play against Israel in Wembley [stadium].

[Host Shirin Famili]

We have reached the last minutes of our evening magazine, I say goodbye to you together with my colleagues and thank you for having joined us. You will hear the next part of the news in 30 minutes.

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